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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Service

Office of Exhibits

## A Summary of the Exhibit

### THE MARKET MEASURE OF LAMBS.

An exhibit showing that the breeder and feeder of lambs must meet market specifications in order to obtain top price or the maximum profit from their labors.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Floor space required	----- width	--- 25 ft.
	depth	--- 7 ft.
Wall space required	-----	None
Shipping weight	-----	1200 lbs.
Electrical Requirements	-----	None.



## THE MARKET MEASURE OF LAMBS

### How It Looks.

Placed on grass-topped stands, in front of the booth, are four accurately made and painted cutouts of lambs - a choice lamb in full fleece and shorn to show the body contours and similar ones representing common grade lambs.

On the walls of the booth are two artistically colored lamb carcasses cutouts of the two types with a statement as to their market value.

The balance of the booth walls is devoted to text giving the requirements of the two grades as regards conformation, finish and quality. The symbolic painted pictures of a "judge", a lamb being "weighed" on the scales, and the scroll bearing the decision of the market "judge" tend to round out the exhibit and make it interesting to the viewer.

### What It Tells

The market sits in judgment on the efforts of the lamb producer and quickly decides whether those efforts have been in line with market requirements. The breeder and feeder may have produced a lamb wholly to their own liking, but if the lamb does not come up to specifications laid down by the market, the breeder and feeder can not hope to obtain either the top price or the maximum profit from their labors.

The market has a system of measuring the desirability of lambs and as a rule pays for them on the basis of the degrees of excellence possessed. In other words grade is the thing which usually determines whether a lamb shall sell at the top or the bottom of the price range. Grade is made up of three factors - conformation, finish and quality.

In conformation a choice grade lamb is blocky and compact, with a broad back, full loins, and short, plump legs and neck.

With respect to finish, such a lamb has a smooth



covering of fat which is well distributed over the body and which is firm to the touch but at the same time possesses elasticity or resilience.

The quality of such a lamb is high and is indicated by a clean-cut head, fine strong bones, firm flesh and a comparatively light pelt without folds or wrinkles.

A common grade lamb is rough, rangy and angular in conformation. Bones are prominent, flesh is thin and shallow, and legs and neck are usually long and thin.

In the matter of finish such lambs show a decided scarcity of fat covering. The Little fat presents lacks mellowness and resilience or "springiness" to the touch. Furthermore, partly due to the lack of fat, the neck, breast and flank are thin and decidedly lacking in fullness.

With respect to quality, common grade lambs are generally coarse in appearance, the bones as a rule are relatively heavy and the pelt is heavy and likely to be wrinkled.

The contrast between the two grades is very striking both in the live lambs and in the dressed carcasses. It is this contrast in grade factors which the market considers of prime importance. It constitutes the estimate which the market places upon the lambs. This might be a matter of little consequence to the producer were it not for the fact that the market expresses its approval or disapproval in terms of price paid the producer.

This is illustrated forcibly in the exhibit, which shows that the average price of choice grade lambs at Chicago during October 1925, was \$15.45 per 100 lbs., whereas the average price of common grade lambs for the same month was \$12.50. Carrying the comparison into the dressed meat, the average price of choice grade dressed lambs at Chicago during October was \$27.50 per 100 pounds, and that of common-grade dressed lamb \$19.70 per hundred pounds. In other



words, during that month choice-grade live lambs averaged \$3.15 higher than common-grade lambs and choice-grade dressed lamb averaged \$7.80 per 100 pounds higher than common grade.

A producer may not agree with a decision which the market renders, but that does not alter the case. The market is the court of last resort. Its decisions are final and there is no appeal.

#### Where to Get Information

Further information on this subject may be obtained free of charge by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.